

Malnourished Imaginations Fail To Comprehend The Significance Of “The Hunger Games”

The Hunger Games ranks among one of the top grossing movies of the past several years. Obviously, something about the film has captured the imagination and interest of a wide range of people and viewpoints.

This includes segments of the Evangelical Christian population as well. One might assume adherents of this particular belief system might be concerned about the violence and language that would seem to be inherent to a tale about teens forced to battle to the death in a form of televised postmodern gladiatorial combat.

Even if details in the story cross the line in terms of propriety, one would think there would be a number of elements within the overriding theme that the believer could find agreement.

A great deal of the saga focuses on how, as the West slides deeper into social decay, conditions revert back to the waning days of Rome. However, the issues raised by homeschool activist Kevin Swanson are in a sense even more shocking than the homicidal lotteries featured in the story.

In a sermon addressing “*The Hunger Games*”, Swanson focused in on a scene where one contestant plotted to eliminate a fellow competitor while they slept. To determine whether such an action was right or wrong, Swanson consulted the account in I Samuel 24 where David could have slain Saul but did not do so while the king slept because, at that point in the narrative, Saul was still the Lord's anointed King of Israel.

Instead of explicating both the Old Testament account and “*The Hunger Games*” as an example of where the Commandment against murder might apply, it seemed as if Swanson elevated the actions of David themselves to the status of an absolute applicable in all situations just because it was David.

Let's just hope Swanson doesn't look to what David had done to Uriah as an example of what a man should do when he desires an unattainable woman. So from the story of Abigail's first husband, should one take away that we should threaten to whack those that diss us (to place the story in the terms of the urban vernacular of those likely on public assistance)?

Yet this is not the most controversial component of Kevin Swanson's thesis. It's not too ludicrous to hypothesize it's not very courageous to slay your enemies while they slept.

Swanson conjectures that, since David would not kill King Saul in the monarch's sleep since God had unequivocally selected Saul to be King of Israel at that specific time, the Christian is obligated to allow the operatives of an out of control government to take the lives of Americans without due process or valid cause under the universal precepts of natural law.

If exegetes arguing this position couple this notion with obeying civil authorities in all instances, where does that end? If during the ambush police, intelligence operatives, or military personnel decide to have their way with the daughters of the proper pliant Christian, would they condemn those resisting such defilement? If not, then why must citizens passively surrender their lives and their property when their other protections from the Decalogue are wantonly violated?

Enthusiasts of unbridled power will remark that such a scenario is unlikely to ever take place. But

what of the incident where New York police were alleged to have shoved a plunger up a suspect's backside? If the government is doing such things, is the proper Christian response suppose to be "Please, sir, may I have another?"

In the years ahead, Christians will be required to make ethical decisions of nuanced gradation as the institutions founded from on high to defend the innocent abandon their intended purpose to rank among the foremost of dangers. Narratives such as *The Hunger Games*, even if Christians cannot endorse them on every point, can assist believers in reflecting upon contingencies beyond the parameters of their normal experience.

By Frederick Meekins